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INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 5944
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 0467
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 USNATO 000141

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/18/2018
TAGS: [KCFE](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [NATO](#)
SUBJECT: APRIL 15 VCC AND VCC EXPERTS, MEETINGS

REF: (A) STATE 38602

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Richard G. Olson, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

11. (C) Summary. At the Experts, Meeting, 17 topics for discussion and exchange of views for implementation issues in VD99 were identified and discussion papers will be prepared for future meetings. The VCC itself was mostly routine, although a conflict between the U.S. intent to conduct a VD99 inspection in Bosnia the week of 20-26 April led to the cancellation of that inspection. Problems for some nations also arose leading to uncertainties about the schedule of VCC and Experts, Meetings for the rest of the year.

12. (C) The experts discussed a list of 16 potential VD99 implementation topics for future work. In the end, two of the topics on the staff list were deleted, two others combined, and four were added leaving a list of 17 topics for future discussion by experts (see paragraph 3 below). Five nations volunteered to draft discussion papers. The staff indicated that it will circulate the full list on the 16th of April and request nations to volunteer to draft discussion papers for the remaining topics. The staff will also identify priorities and the schedule for future discussions. These discussions are intended to provide a full airing of national views. Where possible, they will also identify NATO agreed positions that can be used in the FSC.

-- U.S. representative led off the discussions by summarizing paragraphs five through seven of REFTEL, emphasizing current U.S. objection to new CSBMs or changes in VD99 text while the Russian "suspension" of implementation of CFE continues. U.S. Rep also underscored the importance of the Alliance speaking with one voice by first discussing any proposals at 26 and coming to some resolution--either in Brussels or Vienna--before tabling them for the rest of the OSCE. In response, no Ally expressed disagreement with these points although not all spoke.

-- Further discussions focused on the staff list and a few implementation issues proposed by Allies, virtually all of which have been raised in one form or another over the years at AIAMs. Although it remained in the background of some issues, the "quota race" per se was not discussed. It was agreed that discussion on the German proposal to spread inspections throughout the year, which was already tabled at the FSC, should remain in Vienna. However, there was no indication that Allies intend to seek a common position among NATO FSC delegations before addressing the paper at 56.

13. (C) The topics identified for future discussions, and

some of the points made by Allies, are identified below. It was understood that these are to be circulated by the staff.

- 1. Allowing inspecting and evaluating teams to bring an interpreter (1 per sub team) as auxiliary personnel. Currently in Vienna this has not progressed beyond a Chairman's proposal.
- 2. Concrete parameters for specified area inspections. Rather than the current subjective VD text, some pS have argued for establishing some suitable limit to the size of a specified area, such as 10,000 or 20,000 square kilometers. In spite of U.S., Canadian, and German opposition, this was retained as a topic after Norway supported it.
- 3. Briefings by military commanders. Among the issues connected to briefings was whether the receiving state should brief on installations, units in the specified area, or only on military activities. Denmark will prepare a discussion paper on this issue.
- 4. Military and other defense installations. Several pS have tried to define the term "other defense installations" with little success. Should the inspecting state be allowed access to all installations, training areas...etc.?
- 5. Report (remarks of the receiving state, signed and counter signed, submission of draft report before leaving the country.
- 6. Listing of POEs.
- 7. Minimal standards/modalities for contacts (visits to
USNATO 00000141 002 OF 003

airbases, visits to military facilities, demonstrations). The UK will circulate an aide memoir for discussions on this issue.
- 8. Increases in the number of inspectors/evaluators. The U.S. representative noted that this could currently be addressed only as a voluntary measure.
- 9. Common understanding of Force Majeure. France noted that too specific a common understanding could be a slippery slope since the term "Force Majeure" is used differently in many international agreements.
- 10. Evaluation/ inspection time and stop-watch mechanism during inspections and evaluations. Spain will prepare the discussion paper.
- 11. Counting weapons and systems. Although some argued that counting weapons was a CFE function, others noted that it was implicit in confirming whether an activity should have been notified. The Netherlands and France will prepare separate discussion papers.
- 12. Use of digital cameras and GPS.
- 13. Common understandings on articles 81 (sensitive points), 82 (third party), and 98 (briefings).
- 14. Improving the quality of annual exchanges of military information.
- 15. Quota calculation system for inspections and evaluations. Denmark and Norway noted that they had drafted a food-for-thought paper for the HLTF.
- 16. Size of inspecting/evaluation teams. Although the Chair has this listed as a separate issue, it appears to be much the same as issue 8, above and may be removed from the final list.
- 17. Sending notifications to states parties not connected

to the OSCE network. Recent experiences show that notification and response to notification sometimes goes awry with such states.

14. (C) At the VCC, various states reported on completed VD99 evaluation visits, VD 99 inspections, and CFE inspections, all of which are already or will be in the verity data base. Of interest were:

-- Denial of VD99 evaluations by Kazakhstan and Tadzhikistan on the basis of changes in unit status that had never been reported or notified;

-- A statement by a Russian, during an evaluation in the Czech Republic, that the Russian CFE data as of January 1, 2008 had been fully prepared before the suspension, and that the MOD is compiling Russian flank data for July; and

-- Ireland accepted a French evaluation even though its quota had been exhausted by Russia

15. (C) Various states, including the U.S., reported on plans for upcoming VD99 evaluation visits, VD99 inspections, and CFE inspections. Most of these did not reflect changes from current quotas or schedules, several were part of bilateral agreements, and all will be published soon by the IS staff in meeting decision sheets. Among the changes were:

-- A Hungarian bilateral evaluation in Serbia scheduled for week 17 will now be in week 23;

-- After losing a VD99 inspection in Tadzhikistan to Finland, the UK may conduct a training inspection of Switzerland in week 21;

-- the U.S. adjusted the dates for the VD99 inspection in Russia for the week of 4-10 May to read, "tentative" because of the Russian presidential inauguration activities; and

-- A Danish CFE inspection in Moldova scheduled for time block 15 will now be in time block 29.

16. (C) A problem arose over the U.S. announcement of plans to conduct a VD99 inspection in Bosnia during the week of 20

USNATO 00000141 003 OF 003

to 26 April. Prior to this announcement, the U.S. had indicated that this inspection would take place at a time to be announced. Russia recently used up one of Bosnia's quotas, and Turkey, which had originally scheduled an inspection to Bosnia later in the year, would lose its inspection if the U.S. went forward with its inspection in April. It was agreed between the U.S. and Turkey to request the IS Staff to coordinate an above quota VD99 inspection with Bosnia. Should Bosnia accept, both the U.S. and Turkey would have the opportunity to conduct an inspection as planned. Meanwhile, the U.S. agreed not to notify its VD99 inspection for the week of 20-26 April. If Bosnia does not agree, the U.S. will forego its inspection entirely and seek a guest inspector slot with the Turks.

17. (C) Canada raised the question of when NATO should stop VD99 inspections and evaluations of the two new NATO invitees -- an issue that also applies to Open Skies. The chairman noted that this had yet to be decided but, based upon past expansions, NATO would probably continue verification activities in these states until they had fully and formally joined NATO.

18. (SBU) Turkey announced that Russia had notified that no Open Skies missions should be planned for the week preceding its May 1 holiday. Everyone who responded indicated that this Russian practice was unacceptable.

19. (U) Bulgaria received a hard copy of Tadzhikistan's VD data which had not been provided on time in December 2007.

Copies were provided to all present.

¶10. (SBU) The Chair noted it would propose a time, within the forthcoming VCC meetings, for Allies to review the results of this years experimental coordination of VD99 inspections.

¶11. (SBU) Several Allies indicated problems with both already "agreed" and proposed dates for VCC and VCC Experts' Meetings. As a result, the May 29 scheduled meeting will apparently be for experts only, and the staff is researching possibilities for rooms, etc., for other dates for the July scheduled VCC meeting and for virtually all proposed Fall VCC and VCC Experts' Meetings.

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